

MY INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE:

Enforcing Calvin Klein's Trademarks in New York City

Each year approximately 80 students earn credit towards their degree through Pierce Law's Externship Program. The program is extensive, and includes counseling about educational and career goals and identification by each student of their learning objectives. During their externships, students stay connected with the school through weekly journals, an online course and faculty visits.

Students choose to extern for a variety of reasons. Many are looking for a vocationally relevant experience. Others may choose to extern as a "rounding out" or capstone experience to their education. Students universally seek to learn how to put the knowledge of doctrine and skills they have learned in the academic setting into practice by working on real issues and cases. Externships help students to enhance their research and writing skills and, probably most importantly, to begin to develop their skills in making judgments. Externs also value the opportunity to communicate with practicing lawyers about the law and legal practice.

For organizations and corporations accepting externship placements, there is the obvious advantage of having a student available to help at no added cost. Many supervisors have commented that having a student to help allows them to better service their clients since they can explore extra avenues without charging.

But there are other advantages that are often cited that aren't as obvious. For example, many supervisors gain personal satisfaction from mentoring a soon-to-be new lawyer. Others have commented about the value of needing to explain why they do things a certain way. Such explanation requires seasoned lawyers to think about how they approach different aspects of their work, potentially leading to improvement.

Students are looking for externship placements where they will be challenged and given a breadth of experience. Often, they are seeking opportunities in specific locations or at specific type of firm or businesses. Finding good placements is an ongoing process.

We rely on alumni to help us find placements and many of our graduates, such as Vice President, Enforcement, Legal Dawn Buonocore-Atlas '95 at Calvin Klein in New York, NY, have been instrumental in making these opportunities available. Sara Lentini '08 of Haverhill, MA, had the opportunity to work at Calvin Klein during the fall semester. And Sara is only one of many students Dawn has brought to the New York fashion house. She has mentored Jill Goldman JD/MIP '03, Jacqueline Hudkins JD/MIP '05, Karina Mozogovaya JD '06, Janet Cho JD '07, Kara Brotman JD '07, and Matthew Hintz JD '07.

Please let me know what you can do to open a new door for one of our students.

– PROFESSOR ELLEN MUSINKSY
EXTENSHP DIRECTOR



Sara Lentini '08

On the first day of my externship at Calvin Klein, as I pushed through the crowd on New York's Eighth Avenue, I was still in shock that I had been given the opportunity to work in the legal department of such a high profile company. On that first day, I was full of emotion and concerns: What would my boss be like? Did I have the skills needed to do the work? What kind of work would I be given? As I first stepped onto the twelfth floor of the Calvin Klein offices, with its white walls, white couches, black desks, concrete floors and employees dressed in some shade of black or gray, I could feel my anxiety build with each click of my boots across the factory floors. Also, the irony that a woman whose daily fashion choice was "What hooded sweatshirt would go with what pair of jeans?" was going to work for one of the most revered fashion designers in the world was not lost on me.

Calvin Klein, Inc. designs and markets women's and men's designer collection apparel and a range of other products that are manufactured and marketed through an extensive network of licensing agreements and other arrangements worldwide. With 480 free-standing stores around the world and a global distribution in over 75 countries, Calvin Klein's global retail sales are in excess of approximately \$5 billion.

Their product lines include apparel, accessories, shoes, sleepwear, hosiery, socks, swimwear, belts, eyewear, watches, jewelry, coats, suits and fragrances, as well as products for the home. In 2007, Calvin Klein was again named the "#1 Most Recognized Designer Brand" by *Women's Wear Daily* (July 2007).

Thankfully, and fortunately for Calvin Klein, my externship involved only legal issues and not fashion design. All the anxiety that I felt on that first day eventually disappeared. During the externship, I was able to exercise the skills that I learned during my first two years at Pierce Law and to develop skills that I would need in the future to practice trademark law.

My anxiety was eased primarily by the fact that I had a great advisor and mentor, Attorney Dawn Buonocore-Atlas. I truly feel that I was given the opportunity to learn law in a way that students cannot in a traditional classroom setting. Being thrown into the middle of a large corporation's legal department could have been a trying experience, but with Attorney Buonocore-Atlas' supervision and direction, I gradually became more and more confident with my understanding of Calvin Klein's legal needs and was even able to take on some of the legal work and responsibilities myself.

During my externship, I cleared proposed trademarks for new product lines, reviewed numerous licenses and provided analyses of the licenses. However, much of my work focused on the enforcement side of trademark law, such as helping to authenticate seized shipments of goods bearing Calvin Klein marks at various customs offices worldwide and discussing litigation strategy with in-house officials. Working on such high priority issues with top caliber attorneys was an experience that could

not have occurred in a classroom alone. By observing and helping to manage legal activities at Calvin Klein, I gained insight not only into how a corporation deals with legal issues but also what issues are important to consider when determining legal strategy. This experience taught me not only how to analyze trademark and corporate law issues, but also how to build successful attorney-client relationships because I now understand how a client thinks when faced with a new legal issue.

In addition, Attorney Buonocore-Atlas often permitted me to accompany her to various meetings as a representative of Calvin Klein. I've met with customs officials from around the world as well as industry representatives and lawyers. These meetings often focused on how to combat worldwide counterfeiting, and I was able to learn about concerns from "inside the industry."

In particular, I have become very involved in the New York City Mayor's Task Force, a coalition of brand owners working with officials from the New York City Mayor's Office and the New York Police Department who pool resources to conduct counterfeit investigations and raids. It has been very exciting to have the opportunity to sit in on these meetings and hear industry members' concerns about anti-counterfeiting efforts. Most of the concerns regard the financial cost of each operation and balancing the cost with the benefit to each Task Force member. It is this practical view of trademark law that I obtained by attending meetings with Attorney Buonocore-Atlas, which has made me more aware of clients' issues. In the future, I will be more sensitive to my clients' concerns when I propose a legal action. An attorney should always be aware of the cost to the client, as well as the result of any recommended legal action.

As I join the many new lawyers practicing across the country after graduation this May, I will remember the lessons and skills I learned during my externship at Calvin Klein. My fashion sense may not have improved, but I know that I have gained an unusual insight into the law and a great resource in Attorney Buonocore-Atlas.

A resident of Haverhill, MA, Lentini plans to practice in Boston following graduation.

Buonocore-Atlas, who now calls Long Island, NY, her home, is a member of Pierce Law's Advisory Council for Intellectual Property. Former chair of the International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition, she also served on the Board of Directors of the New York Intellectual Property Law Association. Prior to joining CKI, she worked for Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto.